Project Description

At a Glance

What Else Is It Called?
- Narrative
- Project narrative
- Project explanation

When Is It Used?
- Always

Why Is It Used?
- The funder must have as complete a description as possible to choose from among the proposals received.
- Funders fund well-thought out, workable projects.
- It is critical that the description clearly shows what you intend to do in the project, what resources your organization will contribute, and what role the funder is asked to play.

Key Concepts
- Clear and concise.
- No jargon—you do not know if readers will know your jargon, and it is imperative that the description is clear to readers.
- Cover major project events and list them in logical order.
- If there are any unusual budget request, clearly show how they are necessary for project success.
- If there are technical issues, be sure that the lay person can understand your description.
- You may include a time chart and project organization chart if there is space.

Goals and Objectives Can Be Used For Guidance
- Use goals and objectives as an outline for creating the project description.
- You are likely to have goals that involve the following items:
    - Project set-up, which may include designing training, hiring, partner meetings, and planning sessions.
    - Materials and training.
    - Infrastructure set-up, which may include office space, purchase of computers, and installation of equipment.
    - Intake activities, which may include creating and writing procedures.
    - Project implementation, which may include beginning a study, opening the doors of a clinic, or doing whatever it takes to launch your project.
    - Project evaluation is a critical goal to the funder and should be a separate goal.
    - Project management is important as a goal to inform the funder that you know you have to effectively administer and fiscally manage your project.

- You may not need all these goal topics for your project, but most projects will follow the general pattern listed above.
- Group like tasks together to form objectives.
- Keep your objectives in logical order to communicate clearly to the proposal readers, and to facilitate project management.

Cover All Major Project Events in Logical Order
- If two things are being done at the same time, choose one to be listed first.
- Remember the reader does not know anything about your project. The more logical your project plan sounds to the reader, the more the reader will be impressed with it.
- Only cover major project events—do not get into small, nitty-gritty details.
- Stick to the main project outlines as demonstrated in your goals and objectives.
- Use clear titles to separate different sections of your description.
- Make short, concise paragraphs of four to six sentences, and keep the sentences as short as possible to be readable.
- If there is space, include a timeline. It helps clarifies the workflow for the reader.
  - Keep to the major benchmarks for the timeline.
- It is a good idea to include an organization chart. Do not show every aspect of your organization, just the parts of it that are important to the project.
  - Be sure to show the project as integral to the organization by connecting it to a top manager.

Cover All Hot Buttons
- Sometimes the funder states them outright, and sometimes you have to read between the lines.
- You must always research the funder and read all available material to uncover the hot buttons, to ensure your project matches what they want to fund.
- Before you develop a proposal, follow these three steps:
  1. Develop a good project profile (remember a project solves a problem).
  2. Find funders that, on the surface, look like they have the same interest in solving the problem that interests you.
  3. Research those funders thoroughly to insure you have a match.

Meet Any Special Considerations Listed
- These considerations can be that grantees serve people that are in poverty, that projects come from certain states or regions of the country, are limited to special organization, etc.
- It is very important to read everything the funder publishes to be sure your project and your organization match the funder's preference and requirements.

Special Budget Requests
- If you have a large budget item, be sure that you connect it securely to the project in the project description.
  - Example: You request a lease arrangement for buses for transportation. Show how transportation is a critical part of your project in the project description.

- If you have an unusual request—some budget item for which the purpose is not obvious, carefully connect it to a goal in the project description.
- Do not assume the reason for your budget item is intuitive.

Be Clear on Technical Issues

- You cannot assume that the reader can understand what you are trying to do.
- It is important that you clearly explain the technicalities, so that any reader can understand what you are trying to do.
- Illustrate your technical issue with charts or other graphics when there is space.
- Sometimes it only take one reader giving your proposal a poor score for you to loss an award.

Checklist*—Project Description

☑	Follow grant funder's order
☑	Use grant funder's names for parts
☑	Avoid acronyms
☑	Avoid jargon
☑	Maintain consistency with names and titles
☑	Preempt possible objections
☑	Eliminate possible confusion
☑	Explain unusual activities, situations, or circumstances

*Remember that a grant funder's directions (instructions/guidelines) take precedence over any and all other considerations. You must absolutely, positively follow the grant funder's directions exactly, precisely, and painstakingly.

Keep within required space limitations. If the funder asks a list of questions about your project, answer them in the order in which the funder listed them. Repeat their question and then answer it. Never, ever leave a question out.

Last Words

- Develop goals and objectives before writing the project narrative.
- An Outline is a writer's best friend.
- Use the graphical representation of developing goals and objectives, you simply fill in the five boxes.
- Don't lose track of the fact that you are writing a sales piece, not an academic paper.
- A proposal writer is not involved in a dialogue with the reader.

- A grant proposal is a monologue, a one-way sales pitch, with no opportunity to hear and overcome objections.
- Possible objections must be understood in advance.
  - Look at the project with new eyes, with critical eyes. Look at the project as through for the first time.
- Ask for outside help to review the proposal. This helps foresee objections and preempt them. Remove the possibility of confusion and disagreement in advance. It is the only chance you will have.
- A leader cause of reader confusion is lack of consistency with names and titles.
  - If the person who will lead the project is called the director in one place, do not call that person the coordinator in another place.
  - Do not mention counselors in one place and social workers in another while referring to the same position.
- In a grant proposal, absolute consistency is a cardinal virtue.

Sunnyvale School District

After School Program

Project Description

Introduction
The mission of the After School Program for Middle School students is to improve academic performance, reduce the incidence of behavioral problems, increase recreational and social opportunities, and promote positive parental involvement.

The program is for middle school students and will run at the five middle schools and have a maximum of 1,200 total participants.

The after school program can be described fully by using nine topics:
1. Set-up
2. Training
3. Supplemental academic activities
4. Applied learning activities
5. Recreational activities
6. Social/health services and activities
7. Parental involvement activities
8. Evaluation
9. Management and communication

Topics 1–7 are discussed below, each under its own heading. Topic 8, evaluation, is discussed in a separate section elsewhere in the proposal. Topic 9 includes the subjects of dissemination and continuation along with the management plan. Each of these subjects is discussed in a separate section elsewhere in this proposal.

To simplify the discussion of the seven separate topics, those features of the program that all the topics have in common—mainly, scheduling and transportation—will be discussed under their own headings below.

Scheduling
The program will operate five days a week, Monday through Friday, during the school year (August 15 through June 12). The program will close only for school holidays as published in the official school calendar. The program will operate on those Fridays designated as "Teacher Work Days" on the school calendar. The program will not operate on days that schools are closed due to inclement weather (snow days) but will operate on days designated as "snow make-up days."

The normal hours of operation of the program are from 3:00 to 7:30 P.M. Student activities run from the end of the school day (approximately 3:00 P.M.) until 6:00 P.M. Adult activities are scheduled from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M. The one exception to the normal schedule is that the program is open from 7:00 A.M. until 7:30 P.M. on scheduled "teacher workdays."

The first after school program activity each day is a snack scheduled from 3:00 to 3:15. The snack consists of a serving of fruit (apple, banana, etc.), a starch (crackers, cookie, etc.), or a dairy-based item (cheese, yogurt, etc.), and a beverage (milk, juice, etc.). The snack conforms to the nutrition standards set by the state for school-based food service. Snack menus are set by consultation between the site director, the cafeteria supervisor, and the district nutritionist.

A snack coordinator at each program site, with oversight from the supervisor of the school cafeteria and the site director, is responsible for preparing and serving the snack and cleaning up afterwards. The position of snack coordinator is part-time running from approximately 1:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon.

Supervised homework time is scheduled after the snack. All students in the after school program participate in supervised homework. Tutors, teachers, and other program staff provide supervision. The ratio of staff to students is maintained at a maximum of 1:10. The length of time spent in supervised homework depends on a student's academic situation. Regardless, supervised homework is over for all students at 4:15.

Part of the Individual Academic Plan (IAP) developed for each participant is a determination of the amount of time spent in supervised homework. This is also a time during which students can receive tutoring. Tutoring can be one-on-one or take place in groups of up to five students, depending on the student's need. Another part of the IAP is the determination that tutoring is needed. Tutors can be either adults or high school students. In either case, a tutor must undergo the district's screening process and successfully complete the course of training.

After supervised homework time, students break into small groups for a variety of activities based on the individual student's academic needs and personal preferences. After 3:45 for some students and 4:15 for all students, the remainder of the afternoon is divided into two or three blocks depending on the activities. These blocks may be spent on academic supplementation, applied learning, or recreation, social, or health activities. Students with special needs may be placed in certain activities targeted at the need. An example of this would be anger management. Students who are academically successful may choose their activities for all the blocks. Regardless of their academic situations, all students have one block reserved for their personal choice of activity.

Pick up of students by parents begins at 5:00. All students must be picked up by 6:00. Activities end at 5:15 for students riding a bus. The buses leave at 5:30. All bus riders should be home by 6:45.

Classes for parents begin at 5:30. The lengths of the classes vary based on content. Generally, hands-on subjects such as the various computer classes last an hour, with other subjects lasting only 30 minutes.

Special Note. In this proposal, reference is made numerous times to a "parent" or to "parents." The term "parent" does not convey the complete picture. Complete accuracy would require a phrase such as "custodial parent or legal guardian." For simplicity, we use the term "parent" to refer to the person who is entrusted by law with the care of the child or student in question. This person may be neither the biological nor the adoptive parent but another person who has legal standing as custodian or guardian.

Transportation

Each middle school houses an after school program. Middle school students who participate remain in the same school. Therefore, no transportation of students is necessary at the beginning of the after school program. On teacher workdays when schools are closed for students, it is the parents' responsibility to transport their children at the start of the school day.

Student pick-up begins at 5:00 P.M., and all students must be picked up by 6:00 P.M. The normal school requirements concerning persons authorized to pick up children are in effect. Bus transportation will be provided for students whose parents or guardians, due to work schedules, cannot pick up their children during the hour between 5:00 and 6:00. Parents will be required to attend a conference with after school program staff to arrange bus transportation. Bus drivers are hired from the existing pool of district bus drivers.

Set-up

Set-up includes hiring program staff, recruiting tutors, completing agreements with private contractors, and preparing the physical facilities. The first position to be filled is the program director, the person with responsibility for the entire five-site after school program. The program director works out of the district office and reports directly to the district superintendent. This puts the director of the after school program at an equal organizational level with the four assistant superintendents for curriculum, student affairs, operations, and personnel. Dr. Christopher Allen, now principal of Ripley Middle School, has agreed to assume the position of director of the after school program. Dr. Allen's preeminent qualifications for the position of director can be seen in his biographical sketch in the key personnel section of the proposal. The availability of Dr. Allen to fill the director's position as soon as funding is approved means that there will be no time lag in beginning the other start-up activities.

Using the district's hiring procedures and coordinating with the assistant superintendent of personnel, the director will fill the remaining program staff positions. The director will hire directly the two people who will work at the district office: the assistant program director and the administrative assistant. The program director will also directly hire the five full-time site directors. The position requirements for site director can be seen in the key personnel section of this proposal.

It is important to note that the five middle school principals, though they do not occupy positions on the program organizational chart, are an important part of the program's management team. During planning and project development for the after school program and this application package, the school principals raised serious concerns about having activities occur in their schools which they would have no control over but would be held responsible for. These concerns were addressed in the form of a directive added to the district's policy and procedures manual with the necessary approval of the school board. The policy directs that no activities may be held in a school or on its grounds without consultation and coordination with, and the approval of, the principal. This policy makes each middle school principal an integral part of the management team. It is also important to note that each middle school principal has enthusiastically endorsed housing an after school program. One further note on this subject is that the school board approved a change to the middle school principal job description that includes oversight and collaboration on an after school program. The import of this discussion is that the

middle school principals are involved in decisions about the after school program in their school. That point is not made every time a decision is discussed below, but it remains true.

Each site director, coordinating with the program director and the assistant superintendent of personnel, will hire a full-time assistant site director, a part-time snack coordinator, and five part-time certified teachers. Each site director, in accordance with district policy and procedures, will recruit and screen 30 qualified tutors.

A number of contractors will be hired to provide leadership or instruction in applied learning, recreational, social, and health activities. Examples of activities that might be included are dance, karate, cooking, and cake decorating. The authority to enter into the contractual agreements resides with the program director. An activity committee of the five site directors, chaired by the program Director will make the choices of activities and contractors. The decisions of the activity committee will be guided by the project planning focus group results and input from the advisory committee but will also adhere to the district's extracurricular activity policy. In keeping with district policy, approved written agreements must be executed with each contractor.

The final step in the set-up phase of the after school program is to physically prepare each middle school facility. The site director and the school principal will work through the physical requirements of the after school program and ensure that the facility is prepared to accommodate the activities. For example, if the chairs in the cafeteria are normally placed on the tables for floor cleaning during the time immediately after school, the schedule for floor cleaning must be changed to accommodate the after school snack and supervised homework time. It is the responsibility of the site director and the site principal to ensure that the facility is ready to handle the number of expected participants. This number is different for each site but averages 240 participants.

Train Program Personnel

No person may interact with after school participants in any capacity until successfully completing the three-hour orientation training. This restriction applies to everyone—hired staff, certified teachers, volunteers, and contractors. The orientation training explains how persons representing the school district must comport themselves and the standards and expectations for all interactions with students and their parents. This training is done by district training personnel. Obviously, this training is ongoing, since any staff added as the school year progresses must complete the training before beginning work with students. District training personnel offer the training weekly, because the policy applies to all district personnel. Tutors and the snack coordinators must complete this training.

The persons qualified by the screening process to become tutors must successfully complete the self-paced, online tutor tutorial. They must also pass the subject matter mastery test. It is the responsibility of each site director to ensure that no person tutors students until successful completion of the tutor tutorial and the appropriate subject matter mastery test.

A participant's after school activities do not stand alone, unconnected to the rest of the student's experiences. The ultimate purpose of an after school program is to improve academic performance, reduce behavioral problems, increase recreational and social opportunities, and promote positive

parental involvement. For after school activities to have a positive impact in these areas, they must be targeted with careful purpose. For this reason, school personnel—classroom teachers, counselors, coaches, librarians, and specialists (in short, anyone who interacts with the student)—are the sources of the information that forms a student's after school experience.

The program director, working with the site directors and school principals, must explain to school personnel the pivotal role they play in the success of students in the after school program. In general terms, school personnel are expected to provide the information from which a student's Individual Academic Plan will be developed. Teachers also participate in a homework information loop, the purpose of which is to ensure that the supervised homework time is as productive as possible, perhaps including tutoring. Ongoing information feedback loops ensure that after school activities are aligned to the needs of the student and that both ends of the loop have sufficient information to change activities to meet changing circumstances.

Supplemental Academic Activities

Participation in after school activities will benefit any and all students, but the real targets of this program are those students having academic difficulties. That is why the topic of recruiting students to participate in the after school program is discussed here under academic activities. It must be made abundantly clear that the program does not limit participation on any basis whatever—not race, nor gender, nor religion, nor disability, nor non-English speaking, nor academic standing, nor even past behavioral problems. It is true that certain negative behaviors can lead to expulsion from the program, but all students start in the after school program with a clean slate.

The program will be publicized to all parents with the intention of accomplishing three separate "hits" for each middle school student. Because of the time involved in the set-up phase for the first project year, two report card periods will occur before the program begins operation. A flyer will be sent home with the first two report cards. The third "hit" will be a direct mailing to all middle school parents.

Extra effort will be made to recruit those students most in need of academic supplementation into the program. Teachers will discuss the academic opportunities available in the after school activities during the year's first parent-teacher conferences. In addition, teachers will make follow-up telephone calls to ensure that parents who want their children to participate get the chance. The goal is to recruit about 240 participants per middle school.

Once parents have signed the informed consent forms, the process begins of developing an Individual Academic Plan (IAP) for each participating student. The site director and assistant lead this effort. The process begins with teachers completing an academic progress questionnaire on each student. In many cases, this will provide all the information that the after school staff need to complete the IAP. When additional information is needed, a conference between school day and after school staff will be scheduled through the auspices of the school principal.

As has been discussed already, each participant will spend time in supervised homework. When deemed appropriate during the IAP process, students will work with a tutor. Finally, those students most in need of help will be scheduled for academic supplementation classes taught by certified teachers during the

after school program. For the first two program years, academic supplementation will be offered in language arts and mathematics. Additional subject areas may be added beginning in program year three if the need is great enough and the resources exist.

Applied Learning Activities

Applied learning refers to activities that while not classically academic in nature still teach valuable skills. Examples include cooking, sewing, carpentry, and landscaping.

The first few applied learning topics were determined by results of the planning focus groups. It is the responsibility of site directors and their assistants to canvas participants for additional topics for applied learning activities. After a topic is identified, it must be determined to be acceptable under the district's guidelines on extracurricular activities and it must be approved by the school principal and the program director.

Once an applied learning activity is approved, the site director must recruit a provider. If the provider must be paid, negotiations are turned over to the program director for completion of a contract. Each site will begin the first program year with the four applied learning activities listed above. It is the responsibility of each site director to add one applied learning topic each semester (two per school year). Using a site-based identification process for new applied learning topics allows each site, over time, to develop its own distinct culture.

Recreational Activities

Outside recreation refers, generally though not always, to physical activity in a game or competitive format. Examples include volleyball, soccer, softball, and flag football. The policy of the after school program is that, normally, each student should participate in at least one block of outside recreational activities. For days when outside activity is not practical, indoor activities will be used. Examples include chess and checkers, miscellaneous board games, and "party" type participatory games such as charades.

Inside recreation refers to games such as those listed just above and also to creative pursuits such as drawing, painting, and sculpture. Dance can also be a considered a recreation activity.

As with applied learning, additional recreational opportunities are to be researched and added as the program moves forward. Student preference is the prime source of new recreational activities, though suggestions from parents will be entertained.

Social/Health Services and Activities

For the purposes of the after school program, a social activity is generally one that involves significant interaction between individuals but does not involve competition. Many of the after school social activities involve learning or improving social skills such as interview techniques, telephone etiquette, conversation skills, and conflict management. These activities obviously have a great deal in common with applied learning. Other social activities overlap almost completely with recreation. Dance is the prime example. This overlap of common features is to be expected. The category into which a particular activity is placed is based more on the overall impact than on an inventory of features.

For our purposes, health services deal with issues that affect a child's physical or mental well being. The most common examples are violence and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Other situations may involve people other than the child (usually the parents) and such issues as personal hygiene, nutrition, abuse, or neglect. In such cases, involvement by outside agencies such as social services or child protective services may be warranted.

As with applied learning and recreation, it is the responsibility of the site directors to expand the offerings of social activities and health services to meet the needs and interests of the students.

Parental Involvement Activities

Each site director is responsible for implementing a number and variety of parent involvement opportunities. Examples include workshops, open house, group meetings, individual meetings, a Web site, and direct mail.

Another important opportunity to involve parents is by offering classes on topics of interest to the parents. The results of the planning process focus groups identified computer skills as the topic with the most interest. The after school program will use the computer labs at the middle schools to hold a variety of computer skills classes including basic computer literacy, using email, using the Internet, word processing basics, database basics, and graphics basics.

Additional topics for parent classes revolve around teaching parents how to help their children succeed in school. It is the responsibility of the site directors to constantly canvas parents to identify new parent involvement activities to meet the needs and interests of participant's parents.